

Parapsychological Association

The Parapsychological Association (PA) is an international, professional society of researchers who study psi phenomena, such as telepathy, remote viewing, clairvoyance, psychic healing, clairvoyance, and psychokinesis. It was established on June 19, 1957 in Durham, North Carolina.^[1] It is a private, 501(c)(3), tax-exempt non-profit organization which currently houses its office in Columbus, Ohio, USA. The Association's mission is to promote research and scholarship into currently unexplained aspects of human experience; provide responsible information to the public and to the scientific community; and integrate this information with research and ideas from other disciplines.^[2] It has been affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) since 1969.



Origins

The idea of an international, professional organization of parapsychologists was publicly proposed by the creator and director of the Duke Laboratory, Dr JB Rhine, at a workshop in parapsychology at the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University. The proposal was well received and it quickly became a reality.^[3]

Since its conception, the international aspect of the Association has been a key focus.^[4] Founding members were aware that professional scientists interested in parapsychology are spread far and wide and that the organization needed to be able to reach them in order to accomplish its mission. A committee made of Dr JG Pratt (chairman), Dorothy H Pope and Wadih Saleh was set up to draft a constitution.^[5]

Since the beginning the PA has been made up of members from a myriad of professional backgrounds, including specialists in the biological, physical, behavioral and social sciences. It supports a variety of approaches: laboratory experimentation, phenomenological methods, case and field studies, and historical research.^[6]

A common misconception is that all members of the PA are 'believers in psi'. In fact each individual member holds his or her own opinion, and the Association as an entity neither confirms nor denies the existence of psi. Rather, it affirms that parapsychology is 'supported by twin pillars: open-minded scientific study and rigorous doubt'; and encourages responsible scholarship and research into currently unexplained aspects of human experience.^[7]

Staff and Structure

The PA's first board included Dr RA McConnell of the Biophysics Department of University of Pittsburgh (president), Dr Gertrude R Schmeidler of the Department of Psychology at City College of New York, and Rhea White (secretary treasurer). Other founding board members included Dr Margaret Anderson, Dr Remi Cadoret, Dr Karlis Osis, and Dr William G Roll.^[8]

The PA's bylaws, initially instated in November 1985,^[9] can be found on its website.^[10] The organization is overseen by the Board of Directors and an Executive Director. The Board consists of nine Directors whom are elected by Professional and Associate Members. Two of these seven Directors are the President and Vice-President, who are ex-officio Directors. Directors may serve a term of two years and cannot exceed three consecutive terms. The Executive Director is an appointed employee of the PA and is a non-voting member that serves the board. The Executive Director since 2007 is Annalisa Ventola. Past presidents include notable figures in the field such as Gertrude Schmeidler, JG Pratt, Ian Stevenson, Hans Bender, and Robert Van de Castle.

Membership

The PA has five tiers for membership: professional membership, associate membership, student membership, supporting membership, and honorary membership.

Professional Membership

A candidate for Professional Membership is someone who

- a) is engaged in the advancement of parapsychology as a science
- b) has prepared a paper on some aspect of parapsychology which, in the opinion of the Membership Committee, is of high professional caliber, and which has been published in a scientific journal or which merits such publication
- c) has a doctorate degree from a university of recognized standing or has a professional affiliation with a recognized academic institution or research organization or who has been nominated by three Directors
- d) has been nominated by two Professional Members of the Corporation (this requirement is fulfilled by a person who satisfies the third alternative requirement of 'c')
- e) has been elected by a vote of six members of the Membership Committee
- f) has paid membership due.^[11] (0 per annum)

Associate Membership

A candidate for Associate Membership is someone who

- a) is engaged in the advancement of parapsychology as a science
- b) has graduated from a university of recognized standing or has a professional affiliation with a recognized academic institution or research organization or who has been nominated by three Directors
- c) has been nominated by two Professional Members of the Corporation (this requirement is fulfilled by a person who satisfies the third alternative requirement of 'b')
- d) has been elected by a vote of six members of the Membership Committee
- e) has paid membership dues. 5 (0 per annum)

Student Membership

A candidate for Student Membership

- a) is interested in the scientific and scholarly advancement of parapsychology
- b) has provided evidence of status as a high school student or a student at an accredited college or university working toward a baccalaureate or more advanced degree
- c) has paid the appropriate dues.^[12] (per annum)

Supporting Membership

Supporting members

- a) have an interest in the scientific and scholarly advancement of parapsychology
- b) have paid the appropriate dues (0 per annum).^[13]

Honorary Membership

Honorary membership is awarded to a person who, in the opinion of the Membership Committee, has made outstanding contributions to the advancement of parapsychology in areas other than scientific research

- a) who has been nominated by three Directors
- b) who has been elected by a unanimous vote of the Membership Committee.^[14]

Currently, Honorary Membership has been given to only four people: Richard Adams, Lisette Coly, Robert Franklin, and Luis Portela.

All members receive access to the *Journal of Parapsychology* and *Mindfield*. Members are able to receive discounts for registration to annual PA conventions. They are also given online access to an electronic archive of selected convention papers and videos. Voting rights in elections and meetings are reserved for Professional and Associate Members.

Other Representatives

International liaisons, who are also full members, have been assigned to the following countries: Argentina, Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Iceland, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Spain, Sweden and the UK. International liaisons can be contacted by members or perspective members of their respective countries.^[15]

Each year, a Student Representative is elected to be the liaison for Student Members and prospective Student Members.

Events and Publications

Conventions

In 1958 the PA held its first annual convention, at City College in New York. The annual convention gathers professionals of parapsychology, and others who are interested in the topic, for a weekend of presentations and activities. The first convention outside of the US was held in 1964 at Oxford University.^[16] Presently, annual conventions alternate yearly between North America and Europe. North American locations have included Duke University, University of Virginia, and Stanford University. European locations have included the University of Greenwich in the UK, University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, and the Titania Hotel in Athens.^[17]

Other Events

The PA encourages members to hold regional Association meetings (community oriented events). Regional PA meetings require a professional member to be liaison.

The PA periodically holds community outreach events at its office in Columbus, Ohio. Such events have included regional meetings, anniversary celebrations, art exhibits, and documentary premieres related to parapsychology and exceptional experiences.

Publications

The PA publishes the *Mindfield Bulletin* exclusively for its members. *Mindfield* is published three times a year and includes scholarly articles, news, columns by the PA president, and information on laboratories and researchers from around the world.

The *Journal of Parapsychology*, published by the Rhine Research Center, is an affiliated publication of the PA. It publishes the abstracts of papers from the PA's Annual Convention. Since 2010, the *Journal of Parapsychology* has been available online to PA members.

Grants and Awards

The PA offers the following grants and awards:

Parapsychological Association Research Endowment (PARE Grant) One or more awards between ,000 to ,000 are offered per year to successful applicants. The PARE Grant is intended to pay for direct costs of research.^[18]

Gilbert Roller Fund This award supports research on macroscopic psychokinesis. One or more grants may be given per year up to the amount of ,000.^[19]

Robert L Morris Student Travel Fund This award of up to 0 is given to one or more student applicants per year to subsidize travel costs to the annual convention.^[20]

PA Book Award The PA Book Award is given to one to several books published within the last two years that exemplify substantial contributions to parapsychology including scientific advancement and cultural dialogue. Nominations are considered by the PA Book Award Committee. Awardees are invited to have a seal of the award on the book jackets and marketing materials for their book. Their award will be recognized at the annual convention and they will receive a medal of the seal, as well as a certificate. Past awarded books have included *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*, edited by Etzel Cardeña, Steven Jay Lynn, and Stanley Krippner, *Experimentelle Parapsychologie: Eine Einführung* by Stefan Schmidt, and *Parapsychology: A Handbook for the 21st Century* edited by Etzel Cardeña John Palmer, and David Marcusson-Clavertz.^[21]

Schmeidler Outstanding Student Award This award is given to a nominated student member who 'excels academically and makes early contributions to the field through conference presentations, research or involvement in one or more of the organizations of the field, and/or who has overcome practical difficulties to study parapsychology. The award includes a small cash grant and one complimentary year of PA membership, if the winner is already a member. The winner will also be invited to give a 30-minute invited address at a future PA convention on the topic of his or her choice.'^[22]

Outstanding Contribution Award This award is given to a Professional or Associate Member who has made considerable research or service contribution to parapsychology. The awardee receives a plaque at the annual PA convention and is invited to present an address within two years at an annual convention.^[23]

Outstanding Career Award The PA gives this award as recognition of an on-going (twenty years or more) research or other considerable contributions to a Professional or Associate Member. The awardee receives a plaque at the annual PA convention and is invited to present an address within two years at an annual convention.^[24]

Charles Honorton Integrative Contributions Award This award is given to a Professional or Associate Member who has made considerable research efforts that incorporates parapsychology and mainstream science. The awardee receives a plaque at the annual PA convention and is invited to present an address within two years at an annual convention.^[25]

Social Media and Online Presence

The Parapsychological Association is active in social media, notably [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#). PA members have access to Trellis, the digital communication and collaboration platform of the AAAS.

The PA has an [online bookstore](#) that can be found on its website. As the Association is legally considered a non-profit, it qualifies as an eligible charity for Amazon's [Project Smile](#), enabling Amazon shoppers to choose the PA as a charity to which Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from eligible purchases.

Professional Members are able to have blogs that are featured on the PA's website.^[26] Many of these blogs are interviews and reflections on specific topics related to parapsychology.

The PA offers information a variety of resources, including details on university education in parapsychology, where to share an exceptional experience, theoretical paradigms, and practical applications of psi.^[27]

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References

Footnotes

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